Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0039] with the following amended paragraph:

-- ~~TC type= TC type with ref. to master type — TC base type with ref to master type — 1~~
$TC_{type}= TC_{type\ with\ ref.\ to\ master\ type} - TC_{base\ type\ with\ ref\ to\ master\ type} - 1$ --

Please replace paragraph [0046] with the following amended paragraph:

-- [0046]   In a preferred embodiment of the decoder according to the present invention shown in Figure 4, the decoding operation 400 is described with the aid of a byte code model, where the schema structure 401 is translated into a system of interlinked states which are processed by a byte code interpreter BCI, where a bit stream BS received from the encoder contains the information 402 about the subsequent state to be chosen. In contrast to the model proposed in the MPEG-7 standard, the byte code model is created in such a way that both a bit stream representing a payload as well as a bit stream representing a context path can be decoded. There is, therefore, no requirement to hold the same information contained in the schema twice at the decoder for the different encoding methods. The BCI interpreter reads the information from the incoming bit stream which encodes an XML document or an XML schema in the BiM format. This information allows a choice from among the subsequent states 404 of the current state which is stored in the byte code. The subsequent states are created permanently as pointers P within the byte code. A path, payload or byte code is output (405, 406) depending on the configuration. --

Please replace paragraph [0048] with the following amended paragraph:

-- [0048]   The byte code is made up of structural elements or the states 404. The states are of different types, identified with the aid of the header bit field of the state. The states contain different information fields depending on the type, which are read and, depending on the configuration (payload / context path) and current state, analyzed by the byte code interpreter. --

Please replace the Abstract with the following amended Abstract:

Methods and devices are provided for encoding/decoding structured documents, particularly XML documents, wherein a bit stream or part of a bit stream is produced from a schema as a function of a metaschema with the aid of an encoding method. ~~According to the present invention~~Under an exemplary embodiment, at least one of the following optimization processes is carried out: separation of anonymous types from element declarations and attribute declarations and encoding as own type, the type definition thereof being instantiated in the schema definition as a top level element; normalization of the syntax trees on the encoder side; replacement of the character strings of type names; and transmission of information for the inheritance tree. The decoding takes such optimization processes into account and conversely produces a schema from the bit stream.